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talk, but he had registered the memory for future use. He had, in fact, a vivid, if entirely selective, interest in the vegetation around him. 222

The natives' passionate enthusiasm for hunting adds another interest to their travel through the bush. To them the countryside can be roughly classified according to the type of game that is found there, and in ordinary speech the people describe an area by saying, for instance, that it is a land of elephants or hippos, or that it is a lechwe or reed-buck district. But apart from an interest based very largely on their craving for meat, the Bemba seem fascinated, like other African peoples, by the characteristic appearance and habits of the animals themselves—the fantastic size of the elephant, the laugh of the hyena, the ferocity of the lion or the crocodile. The hunter tracking his quarry through the bush is plainly keyed to a pitch of concentration watching for every sign of its tracks, but men and women simply travelling from one village to another will also seek for traces of game of any sort, just from their interest in the habits of the animals themselves. The different species of fish have not the same fascination for the majority of the Bemba, although they form quite an important source of food. But they seem deeply interested in the rivers of their country. They compare the value of different chieftainships, not only in terms of the game in each particular district, but also of its supplies of fish. Rivers are among the most striking landmarks in this country and form the natural boundaries of chiefs' territories. Each tributary stream, however small, has its name which is used to define the position of different villages in the neighbourhood, while the bigger rivers seem to be a source of aesthetic delight, though perhaps merely as the potential source of so much food. I noticed on different trips that carriers spoke with real enthusiasm of the size of any large river that we were about to reach, and I have heard the natives from one district compare their rivers braggingly with those of other areas. A knowledge of the exact course of different rivers is only gradually acquired by a travelled man and is much admired. I once heard a group of children under 12 arguing hotly as to the order in which different local streams flowed into the Manahya river nearby. The discussion became so heated that a series of bets were arranged as to the results. It was characteristic of a tribe with few material possessions that the wager should consist of a stated

825

823

823
525.

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number of slaps, to be given by the winner and accepted by the loser!

This question of the general economic and aesthetic interests of the native in his environment needs to be discussed at the outset. It lies at the root of the fundamental difference in outlook between the European and the Bantu with regard to land. The Bemba does not measure land, assess its value in size or productive capacity, or conceive of this value as a figure to be permanently maintained at a given figure by the expenditure of effort and capital. He views the country round him as all one unit, all accessible to him, and all ready to supply his needs—trees to be used for wood, ash for his gardens, building material or medicines, and wild plants, game and fish for food. Whether or not he succeeds in wresting a living from the *mpanga* depends on his constant and intent observation of his surroundings, his traditional knowledge, and, the next important factor to be considered, the help of supernatural powers.

Land and Supernatural Blessings.

The Bemba believe that the *mpanga* is under the influence of supernatural beings, the spirits (*imipashi*) of dead chiefs who reigned over the country, or of the ancestors of the headmen in charge of individual villages. They conceive of the bush as a whole, yielding or withholding its produce according to the good or ill will of supernatural powers. The garden of an individual Bemba may fail owing to his own folly, or the hostile magic used against him, but it is a calamity more to be feared that the *mpanga* itself may refuse its spoils. It is obvious that where a people's livelihood depends to any extent on uncultivated plants, fish, or game, the element of uncertainty must actually be pronounced, and the Bemba believe that this 'luck of the bush' is in the hands of ancestral spirits to grant or withhold at will. When a native uses the word *ukushyuka*, 'to be lucky', or its opposite *ukushyuma*, he may do so casually in general conversation, just as we sometimes speak laughingly of fortune having been for us or against us on any special occasion. More often, however, he uses the words in a more serious sense, which may cause him to lower his tone or look around to see if he is being overheard. Spoken in this manner, *ukushyuma*, 'to be unlucky', means to be an individual who has, either by breaking a tribal code, or failing in some cere-